1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

TOPICS OF THE MEETINGS

623 651 The most important and delicate topic of discussion at meetings is always the subject of taxes. These taxes are decreed by the T'u-ssu as a lump sum imposed on the entire village. The villagers have then to group themselves by wealth in five classes and to pay more or less taxes according to this classification. The classification of families is a very difficult and delicate problem. In the discussion everybody asserts that he is, and proves himself to be, the poorest man in the village, deserving to be put in the lowest classification. The tax imposed on the village is compared with the taxes on other villages, and the chief of the village is criticized for not having defended the interests of his village. These meetings also fix the date on which the taxes have to be ready either to be carried by the villagers in a group to the mansion of the T'u-ssu, or to be ready for the nobles who come to collect them. Illegal and oppressive exactions by the officials of the T'u-ssu and difficulties with the collecting nobles are discussed, and entrusted to the chief of the village for redress or for conciliation with the T'u-ssu.

623 312 Another important topic is the digging or repairing of irrigation canals. The number of digging days required from each family is adjusted to the amount of land each family cultivates. Quarrels are patched up with families accused of having kept the water from the canal turned into their fields for longer than the allotted time. The proper time is calculated by the time taken to burn a certain number of incense sticks for the irrigation of a determined acreage of fields.

623 651 794 At these meetings the contributions of every family are fixed for the expenses of keeping the village temple in repair and payments to the shamans who perform the two important rites of spring and of protection against storms and hail, and of thanksgiving for the harvest.[4] An apportionment is also made of the liability of members for all kinds of corvées, or obligatory services, religious as well as administrative. The groups of youngsters must be ready day and night to stay in and even sleep in the temple in order to avert the danger of hail and storms in summer. Duties must be assigned also for taking care of the sacred animal of the village, and for preparing the performance of all kinds of religious rites carried out on behalf of the village. Villagers must also be designated for all kinds of corvée service at the mansion of the T'u-ssu.

622 627 The officials must also be prepared to deal with all kinds of problems in the private lives of the villagers (except family vengeance feuds). If a villager has got himself into difficulties or is burdened with troubles not of his own making he goes to the chief of the village, presents to him a scarf of felicity and a bottle of wine, and invites him to iron out the problem. The chief

[4] The religious aspects of Monguor life will be discussed in a second volume, now being prepared for publication.

[P. 776]

[835 cont.]

241 782 procession moves from the temple directly to the nearest mountain and along the ridges across all the mountains of the entire village area. On each height the customary incense offering is burned by the two men, while the procession itself moves on. Towards midday, however, a halt is made on a height especially designated for this purpose. After the incense offering refreshments [264] are taken. The people bring bread, tea, and soup here in advance. Then the procession marches on. Not until evening does one return to the temple. On the following day the people take the books back to the lama monastery.

[836] **Details**

[562] Persons: Only male persons may take part in the procession, regardless of whether they are adults or boys, so long as they are strong enough to carry the heavy book and can pray the mani. The seed-supervisor determines how many persons each family must provide to make up the number of 108 book-bearers. If there are not enough people in one village, help is brought in from the neighborhood. Chinese are also admitted. -- In fetching and taking the books back to the monastery the number does not matter, so one person may carry two books. The Tibetan books are, to be sure, very large and heavy, since they are bound between two boards.

241 782 624 794 The seed-supervisor is changed every year at the harvest thanksgiving offering. He is charged with taking care of all the religious celebrations of the year. He is not the village mayor, however. Because his main concern is the seed, he is called seed-supervisor. The supervisor of the past year helps him (2).

[171] [797]

2. [Foreign text p. 838.] The Chinese, too, have such a religious supervisor who is chosen annually. Usually he is simply called t'ou-jen, that is, head man, or he is also called huei-t'ou, that is, meeting (festival) head; ch'ing-miao t'ou is also used,

[836 cont.]

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[Note on foreign text p. 838 cont.] but only for the period of the sowing festival with the cult dances. -- The Christian missionaries have taken over this arrangement for their ecclesiastical celebrations and folk festivals. Thus, besides the community mayors there are also special supervisors who, for instance, organize the festival for processions or at Easter, accommodate the guests, slaughter the festival sheep, etc.

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It is not absolutely necessary for there to be several soothsayers. If a village has several, however, they must all appear. If it has none at all, then it invites at least one from outside. A lama or a Bon priest is never invited.

Time: The time for the procession around the field is determined by the soothsayer at the pole-goat offering in the spring (aradziãñ) on the thirteenth day in the fifth month. The

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procession itself must always be in the seventh month, when the seed is developing ears, because the greatest danger for the coming harvest is precisely at this time on account of the many and big storms during this month (3). The time is also often

3. [Foreign text p. 838.] Cf. the sections, "Mountain Sheep-offering" and "Pole-goat."

determined in the lamasery. Since, of course, there are many villages that want to hold the procession, it may happen that two villages set the same time. Therefore the seed-supervisor goes to the monastery a month in advance and inquires when the books are available. The day is determined accordingly. -- It is usually calculated that the ceremony will last three days, one day for fetching the books, one for the procession, and one for

3: Schröder--248.M-5 (1946-1949)1952-1953 AE9 Monguor AE9

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[838 cont.]

Seed-supervisor:	tõrõdzi (supreme head); ch'ing-miao t'ou (Chin.) = young-seed-master.
Trumpet:	dõñ; la-pa (Chin.) = Chin. shawm.
Cymbals:	nao (Chin.) = the large beating plates; rẽbuoǧẽ (?). ts'a (ch'a)-pao (Chin.) = small sounding plates.
Flags:	ch'i-tzu (Chin.).
Books:	luãn = prayer; ching (Chin.) = prayer.
Book-bearers:	luãn rẽgudzin kun = prayer-bearing people.

[Pages 838-839 contain the notes given above as numbered footnotes.]

[839]

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VI. Customs in case of Misfortune for Man and Animal

1. The Animal-consecration*

* See "Notes," pp. 842-844 [of the foreign text]. [In the translation these notes are given as numbered footnotes following the designations for them in the text.]

Report

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When the children die, the cattle are stricken, the harvest is battered, or other great misfortunes befall a family, a god is angry. One must appease him. Sometimes the god desires an animal. One learns from the soothsayer which god and which animal are involved (1). He summons the spirit

1. [Foreign text p. 842.] Here, too, the soothsaying can be done through the litter or the spirit-table,

twist their rosaries on their wrists, even in the city, or 781
to turn a small prayer wheel all day. While no one 788
understands the meaning of the prayer formula, the Monguor saying his Om Mani intends it as adoration to Buddha.

Religion is a family as well as an individual matter. 794
The chief of the family is its religious head and its rep- 782
resentative. He worships "Heaven and all the spirits" on the roof of the home or in its courtyard. It is his duty to honor the protector-deity of the family. Each family honors the image of its family protector-deity. At the time of the division of a family inheritance, it is the privilege and duty of the eldest son to continue worshipping the old family deity honored by his ancestors. The chief of the family is its representative at the performance of public rites. Attended by his family, he performs the rite of opening the fields in the spring to start farming; he gives orders for the worship of the various kind of spirits honored by the family—"the spirit of the hearth," "the spirit of the stables," etc.—and sets the example by praying the Om Mani and fingering his prayer beads.

The compulsory social aspect of the religious life of 794
the Monguors is evidenced by the fact that the chief of 622
the village and its elders administer both the official and religious life of the people in it. Even as they apportion land taxes among the villagers, according to wealth [65]
and productivity, so do they assess families a fixed sum for religious services. They impose corvées on the villagers for municipal functions as well as for such religious functions as protection against hailstorms or the sacred animal of the village. In the same manner, heads of families are summoned to participate in rites at the temple or on the top of the sacred mountain. The time of religious rites is fixed by the village chief. He performs the community thanksgiving rite just as the family chief does in his own circle.

The village chief is not the only organizer of religious [614]
life in the village. The chief of the clan is its promoter. It is he who offers sacrifice at the clan's ancestor rite. On his triennial visit, the clan chief brings the image of the protector-deity of the clan, so that each village may fulfill its duty of honoring it. He makes inquiry about public worship in the village and the morality of his subjects.

Religious activities are part of the family and social life of the Monguor society. Their social organization is woven into a religious environment. The chiefs of families, villages, and clans are its promoters. All clansmen are obliged to participate in the public rites.

The intensiveness of the religious life of the Mon- 771
guors is further demonstrated by the fact that they are 754
not only known as practicing Lamaists, but also as fer- 756
vent adherents of shamanism, and practicers of many rites which do not seem to belong to either Lamaism or shamanism, being performed by neither lamas nor

[p. 6(A)]

understand the striking incompatibility which exists between the religious and philosophical principles of these religions, while we see the paradox of things which cannot coexist logically, actually coexisting in a very smooth and natural way. The Monguors believe that each of these religions is right, and practice them according to their various circumstances of life. While their knowledge about dogmas and religion is limited and unstable, their religious spirit is unusually developed. What is the reason for this trend of mind, this carelessness concerning differences between religions and philosophical principles? Our illusions and misunderstandings occur because we compare the conversion to Lamaism of the Mongols and the Monguors with the conversion to Christianity of peoples in ancient times, and assume that a similar change of mind took place among the Monguors. We envision churches filled to capacity for weekly worship, people receiving instructions about definite dogmas, children attending parochial schools, learning prayers, studying religion, and being educated in their belief, and we also envision a group of religious leaders, proficient in the religious sciences, but none of these exist or form a part of Lamaism.

The vast and splendid temples in the monasteries are not churches or places where the faithful fulfill in common their religious duties. Lamas recite texts in the temples; laymen do not. There are no spiritual leaders, skilled in religious sciences, to preach and instruct the faithful. Nowhere are there parochial schools for children; nor is anything done to provide serious religious education for the people. Lamaists are like stray sheep without shepherds, for nowhere is there a pastor or rector taking care of definite groups of the faithful. In teaching Christianity, new notions and principles were instilled in the minds of prospective converts. Their incompatibility with the principles of other religions was explained. The prospective converts were taught that they must live according to the principles of Christianity; that in order to do this they would have to change from their way of life to the Christian way, by changing their conduct, feelings, habits, and way of thinking. None of these things are taught about Lamaism. The religious value of the faith is never explained. No zeal is displayed in order to form serious types of Lamaists. The lama does not care about the shaman as he performs his rites; the shaman does not mind, and acts in like manner; the Taoist, considered as the second best, does not bother, for he is very happy to be invited and to earn some money. Shamans are considered the most potent men in certain circumstances, while lamas are believed to be the appropriate performers of certain kinds of rites. Consequently, the two religions are considered equally necessary and equally right.

The fact that serious Lamaists are not formed appears to be responsible for the Mongours still being fer-

tery in the most luxurious style. The head temple, with its gilt tiled roof, which had been preserved, was embellished and other temples rebuilt. He rebuilt a splendid palace for himself patterned after the most luxurious palaces in Peking. Chang-chia's Ch'ie-bzan was the wealthiest monastery in the country, with 150 lamas, 2 colleges, and 4 minor Living Buddhas. Most of its wealth was provided by Mongols, among whom the influence and prestige of Chang-chia was proverbial. 175 792 346

Every year, lama expeditions of Ch'ie-bzan traveled in Mongolia in order to collect alms. Chang-chia's prestige was so great that the Queen of the Torgots came to Ch'ie-bzan in 1913, to invite the intendant of the monastery to send an expedition among her tribesmen, for it had been a long time since an expedition had reached her country. I happened to be at Ch'ie-bzan in 1914 when the expedition returned. It had collected 3,000 sheep, 400 horses, and 280 camels, which were loaded with wool and skins. 175 794 648

The breach between T'u-kuan and Sumpa, which occurred in 1890, was more tragic. During the rebellion of the Moslems, Sumpa (born in 1854) had fled among the Mongols and Tibetans, north of Kukunor. He met with a Mongol girl, whom he had moved to his branch monastery called Sumpa-ssu. The lama community of Erh-ku-lung, after some years, could no longer stand the disrepute brought on the monastery. It brought suit against Sumpa before the Amban in the prefectural city of Hsining, claiming he was not a genuine reincarnation. The lama community urged that he be erased from the list of Buddhas, and insisted on the right to search for the genuine reincarnation. For several months the lamas disturbed the whole city with the scandal, and spent money. The Chinese enjoyed all the incidents of the trial. Sumpa lost his face and honor irretrievably. Sumpa, however, was rich and the Amban venal. The Amban finally proposed that Sumpa leave Erh-ku-lung and move to one of his affiliates. This reincarnation (the third) of the illustrious Sumpa, having cut a sorry figure, never returned to Erh-ku-lung, but lived at his branch where, in 1916, his two girls delighted the old age of their father, who was sixty. His eldest daughter had married the son of the chief of the Aruk tribe. In 1916 the old man made a pilgrimage to Lhasa, and the lamas said he was atoning for his sins. No wonder that the Li-fan yüan records lacked information concerning the subsequent reincarnations of the Great Sumpa. 175 578 792 [691]

The Living Buddha Ch'ie-bzan of Erh-ku-lung having a branch monastery of his own, moved into it, appearing at Erh-ku-lung only to attend the festivals. The Living Buddha Wang lived in retired seclusion. Soon after the trial of Sumpa, the minor Living Buddha Tsung-tsa, one of the eleven, followed in the steps of Sumpa and established a family in Tsung-tsa. In the winter of the same year, the minor Living Buddha Seerting was taken and beaten at night by the husband and 175 792 627 762

[p.37(A)]

lama community of Erh-ku-lung that brought suit against Sumpa and spent the money for the trial, not T'u-kuan Hutukhtu, who would not interfere to prevent the scandal. 792

The colleges or faculties in monasteries are also recognized autonomous units, with their own administration, properties, wealth, gifts, alms, and the right of suing in Chinese courts. I do not have any record of colleges possessing branches, but I suppose they do. [794]

What bond binds these disparate elements together? Usually a Living Buddha who is the supreme chief of a lamasery is honored by the lamas, who know that he is always ready and braced to defend the rights of the institution, like Achia at Kumbum. When the communities or colleges meet with financial troubles, they know that the supreme chief uses his own wealth to make donations to them—"help provided makes sympathy wax." Nevertheless, each institution has its own administration, and the supreme chief does not interfere with its jurisdiction. The governing board of each institution confers with the supreme chief on the appointment of administrative officers and on such matters as the invitation to be sent when a new Fa-t'ai is needed.

If troubles arise the board of the autonomous institution takes advice from the supreme chief, and many difficulties are thus avoided. Finally, the supreme chief has the right to dismiss recalcitrant members, but if an entire group persists in standing up for its rights, and threatens to bring suit in the Chinese court or to quit the monastery, the supreme chief can rarely prevail against them. Nobody can prevent a lama or a group of lamas from quitting a monastery; no vows or bonds tie the lamas to any monastery. Undoubtedly, a great amount of kindness and devotion on the part of the supreme chief toward the members of the monastery is required. This is the real keystone of an effective administration in monasteries whose elements are so loosely united.

ADMINISTRATION OF LAMASERIES: MATERIAL ASPECTS

The administration of a lamasery is complex. In order to get a better insight into the matter the material aspects will be dealt with first, and then the religious and educational.

OFFICIALS AND THEIR ATTRIBUTES

Most Living Buddhas who are supreme chiefs of monasteries live in retirement in their palaces, and are happy to entrust the entire material administration of the institution to a lama intendant, for whom the Tibetan term is Tsuordzi and the Chinese term, Hsiang tso. The few exceptions who are meddlers with the administration are well known throughout the country, and that kind of Living Buddha usually does not get very far with his intendant.

[p. 39(A)]

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

case with the subjects of the T'u-ssu, and so no outstanding rich families could rise up among them. Since the entire administration was carried on exclusively by lamas, the subjects could hardly incur any important social prestige within their circle, or become leading personalities, and certainly not during the entire Ming period (1368–1644) when intermittent troubles and interruptions of trade curtailed the opportunity to become rich. Accordingly, the lamas effectively controlled the subjects and their domains.

As no written code of law existed, the lama officials helped themselves with a house law on a grand scale, by imposing taxes, corvées, and tribute, mediating troubles in families, meting out punishments and imprisonments for crying injustices. The subjects, pinning their hope on a better living, were submissive and obedient, simply because the chief lama was their lord.

It is easy to understand that the subjects of the monasteries enjoyed no rights of their own, but they depended entirely on the administration of the chief of the monastery and his lama officials.

It may be supposed, however, that capital punishment of the subjects of the monasteries was reserved to the emperor, as it was in the case of subjects of the T'u-ssu. It is not known whether, before 1723, the right of recourse of the subjects to a higher Chinese court existed or not. If it did exist, it must have been nominal, as it is at present.

The living conditions of the subjects, however, must have been for the most part bearable, as evidenced by the fact that so many people applied to the lamaseries to become subjects. Only after 1723 are a few cases known of subjects revolting against the chief lama and his officials, such as the case of Yang-kuo-erh-ssu, and that of the subjects of the Sina tribe, who preferred to become Chinese subjects rather than remain subjects of the lamas. On the other hand, the unbelievably large number of lamas from among the subjects, since every family had a son or an uncle lama, must have disposed the families favorably toward the monasteries and their chiefs, and made the subjects overlook the shortcomings and deficiencies inherent in any human institution.

The reasons why the privileged status of the monasteries lasted for so long in Huang-chung were, first, the insecurity of the country, especially after 1509, and then the influence of the Erh-ku-lung Hutukhtus in Peking.

The chiefs of the monasteries were, at the same time, the temporal and the spiritual chiefs of the subjects. The subjects were compelled to invite the lamas on whom they depended to recite texts in behalf of the families or of the communities, or to perform public or private ceremonies, to the exclusion of lamas of other communities, at such times as epidemics, epizootics, the burying of the dead. They had to make donations at fixed times, when their lamas, their chiefs, came touring for alms among them. Corvées were imposed at the time of celebrations and festivities at their lamaseries.

[p. 50 (B)]

However, no compulsory religious instruction was provided for adults or children in order to make the subjects more fervent, and no schools or charitable institutions existed. The subjects were never compelled to attend ceremonies in the temples, for only lamas recite texts in temples, and temples are not what we are accustomed to calling churches. Finally, the religious activities imposed on the subjects reflected more a material than a spiritual interest, and bound them closer to their chiefs. 175 792 794

If we take into account the period of incredibly rapid increase in the founding and branching out of monasteries, the number of lamas must have been tremendous. Certainly the revolt of 1723 and its drastic suppression largely prove this assertion. Necessarily, the absorption into the lama communities of a large proportion of the male population of the country must have adversely affected productivity. Men who became lamas were not only withdrawn from production, but had to be fed by the depleted population. It is easy to understand that in such circumstances trade and industry could by no means develop and flourish. The large groups of lamas did not produce anything; they merely consumed the production of the country and hoarded its wealth. Their economic role was simply that of consumers, and so the economy of the country was necessarily agricultural and limited to its needs. 175 792

The same conditions existed in the two cities of Huang-chung and in the garrisons. There the soldiers and the relatively feeble population consumed what the colonists could produce. Only later on, when peace was restored, communications with the capital of the province assured, and trade had become possible, could the cities and the whole country develop and emerge from the former limited agricultural economy—an outlet had been found for the products of the country. The farmer, assured of the possibility of selling as much as he could produce, started producing to the peak of his capacity. These conditions seem to explain the deadly stagnation prevailing in the country from 1368 to 1723.

These seem to have been the conditions of lama Buddhism between 1368 and 1723 in Huang-chung, the privileged legal position of the temporal and spiritual chiefs of large and small lama institutions, the important role played by the monasteries, Nang-suos and Karwas, centers of the public and private life of the country, the bursting activity displayed inside the walls of the monasteries, the conditions of the subjects of the monasteries and the economic consequences arising from the tremendous number of the male population which had become lamas.[9]

[9]H. H. Vreeland, 3rd, Mongol community and kinship structure, *Human Relations Area Files*, New Haven, 1954. After the completion of the present study, there appeared this outstanding study dealing with the Khalkha Mongols of the Narobanchin territory, the Chahar Mongols of the Taibas pasture and the Dagor Mongols of the Nonni River valley. The study [13]

[p. 51(A)]

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

BRANCH LAMASERIES

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It has been noted how at Erh-ku-lung there existed 792
from the very beginning a real passion for the founding of hermitages, which began as affiliates and later became independent monasteries. Not only did the three founders of the monastery found their own branches next to those of the monastery, but the lesser Living Buddhas, the communities of lamas, and the colleges followed their example. According to the superiors of the monastery, and the general testimony in the country, forty-two branches proceeded from Erh-ku-lung. Several times prominent lamas told me that the founders of branches had a predilection for them at the time of their founding, but later they invariably became a burden.

ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICIALS

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The first act of the founder of a branch was to ap- 792
point a rector, Nirwa (Nerpa), as chief of the new 794
community. At the beginning, when the group of lamas was still small, he held the entire authority in his own hands. Later on a lama disciplinarian, Ge-ko, a precentor, Um-dse, and an adviser to the rector were added, and the administration was complete. For a very long time, the rector also had the function of procurator. The rector and the disciplinarian were appointed by the founder of the subsidiary for a three years' tenure of office. Later, precentor, adviser, and procurator were chosen by the community. The rector and the disciplinarian were invited to the mother house to receive their appointment. The whole community of the branch had to come to the mother house in order to invite and to acknowledge the new authorities by

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concerning the lamasery of Narobanchin, based on data provided to the author by the Dilowa Hutukhtu himself, coproprietor of the institution, gives a unique insight into the nature of a lamasery, situated in the open Gobi desert, among nomadic tribes insulated from the impact of the Chinese civilization and culture, and in its adaptation to the tribal, social and economic environment. The history of the founders is noted, the way the banner princes granted territories, allowed their subjects to abandon them in order to become plain subjects of the lamasery, the legal status of the lamasery and its subjects, the rendering of justice by the lamas, the interesting administration of the temple wealth and property, the means of subsistence of the subjects, the levies, services, and corvées imposed by the lamasery, etc. This study sheds light on what the social and economic conditions of the subjects of the Monguor lamaseries must have been before the revolt of 1723, and is a perfect foil to the actually existing conditions of the subjects of the Monguor lamaseries. This study for a long time will remain a standard work in this special field. The study of shamanism among the Dagor Mongols (p. 250) is a very valuable contribution to the subject of shamanism among the Mongols; many new facts and peculiar conceptions concerning souls, death, and spirits are secured and their impact upon the family life exposed. The peculiar position and behavior of the shamans in the Dagor society is very instructive.

The chapters concerning the social organization, economic life, and kinship and property structure of these tribes are of equal importance, but they do not fit into the frame of this study.

[p. 51(B)]

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

prostrations and by presentation of the ceremonial scarf. They escorted them to the branch where a sheep was killed and a dinner enjoyed.

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DOMAINS AND REVENUES

An affiliate, in order to enjoy viability, had to possess a territorial domain. The mother house, where possible, assigned to it a part of its own domain; where this was not possible, the founder made arrangements to provide a domain. The T'u-kuan bought some ground for his affiliate of Ma-t'i-ssu. Every year the affiliate had to pay the interest of the capital thus invested, amounting to 60 taels or 36½ bricks of tea. The rector of the affiliate was bound to account for the material administration of his institution, receipt of rents, selling of trees, investment of the capital of the affiliate, and herds, and required a fixed sum to be sent out of the revenues to the intendancy of the founder. Finally, the intendant of the founder supervised the material administration of the subsidiary. When recalcitrant subjects refused obeisance, the rector and the disciplinarian sent them to the mother house, but such subjects would quit the monastery before they were summoned to see the founder.

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OBLIGATION TO A FA-T'AI WHEN INVITED

When one of the members of the subsidiaries is invited to take the office of Fa-t'ai (Lob-pon) at the mother house, he is never allowed to decline the invitation, even after the subsidiary has become entirely independent, and even if the man thus summoned to officiate as invited Fa-t'ai is a Living Buddha or the supreme chief of the independent monastery. This custom seems to be general.

OBLIGATION TO JOIN THE RETINUE OF THE CHIEF OF THE LAMASERY

When the founder of the affiliate makes a long journey or accompanies an alms expedition to far-off countries, the branches must send lamas to make up his retinue. When the T'u-kuan Hutukhtu went to Peking to fulfill the assignment entrusted to him at the capital, even the independent old branches were kind enough to present a couple of lamas each to enhance his prestige. When he went to Peking for the last time, seventeen independent branches sent lamas. Lamas like to visit the capital, since it is a remunerative business. In the Orient a traveler always does some business on the way, especially an eminent personage such as T'u-kuan, traveling as a state official. He and his retinue enjoyed the privilege of going everywhere free of taxes.

175 792 484 [534]

AUTONOMY OF BRANCH LAMASERIES

How did the subsidiaries become independent? The tragic events which occurred at Ch'ü-t'an and Yao-ts'ao-t'ai have already been recorded. Although such

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tragic events seldom happen, independence is never acquired without friction between the daughter and mother houses. Usually the difficulties begin with the crucial problem of the delivery of the share of revenue required by the intendancies of the founders. The separation usually occurred, according to old lamas, at a time when the mother house was involved in inextricable difficulties and unable to assert its authority, or when the founder was still in the prime of life.

The obsession for having Living Buddhas started in Erh-ku-lung in the second half of the seventeenth century with the incarnations of the founders. Very soon some of the subsidiaries endowed themselves with their own Living Buddhas, partly for decorative reasons and partly in anticipation of a possible rupture with the founders. These Living Buddhas eventually seized a favorable opportunity provided by circumstances to declare their independence and take possession of the territory formerly allocated to the subsidiary. On the other hand, it is easy to understand that subsidiaries, which had developed to the point of having several hundred inmates or two thousand as in Seerkok, split away (from the mother house) when they had capable authorities, or when the intendancies of the mother house were too exacting and greedy on the question of collecting a share of the revenues of the subsidiary. At such a time the veneer of filial devotion easily scales off.

This was the case with the affiliate of T'ien-T'ang with its seven hundred lamas, two Living Buddhas, and three colleges. Its founder, T'u-kuan, squeezed to the wall, understood the gravity of the situation and made the best of a bad bargain, granting independence after it had been declared, provided the duty was acknowledged of presenting a yearly allocation to the intendancy of one of the Living Buddhas of T'ien-T'ang, the teacher in a former incarnation of T'u-kuan (this was a delicate gesture), together with the right to graze his herds on the domain of the new monastery. The conditions were gratefully accepted and good relations between the former daughter and its mother house continued.

The branch of Ta-ssu, depending on the community of the lamas of Erh-ku-lung, had troubles with the intendancy of its founder concerning the crucial question of the exaction of revenues. It happened that one of the lamas of Ta-ssu, scion of the noble family of the Lu T'u-ssu, died. The shrewd lamas invited the supreme chief of the lamasery of Ch'ü-t'an in order to inquire whether the departed lama had or had not been of the stuff of which Living Buddhas are made. The intelligent Living Buddha of Ch'ü-t'an easily understood the meaning of the fervent lamas and declared that the noble lama was already reborn in the family of the Prince of Alashan, and it happened that the wife of the noble Lu T'u-ssu was a princess of Alashan. This was a double blessing sent by the Buddha! Independence was immediately declared, backed by the in-

[p.52(B)]

4; Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

fluential family of the Lu T'u-ssu and the Prince of Alashan, and a new monastery was born. The community of Erh-ku-lung was powerless. 175 792 794

It sometimes happens that a branch not having its own Living Buddha does not wait to declare its independence. Chai-ya, a small branch of forty lamas dependent on T'u-kuan, possessed some forests; the selling of trees was its primary source of revenues. The subprefect of P'ing-fan confiscated the forest in 1912. At the time, rumors were spread all over the country concerning the confiscation of the domains of all the monasteries. T'u-kuan, deeming it not the appropriate time to accuse the subprefect at the capital of the province, did not help the branch to recover the forest. The frustrated and infuriated branch boldly declared its independence and thereafter had no further relations with the founder. 571

Kalang, an old, independent affiliate of Labrang, founded its own branch, Pi-t'ang. Pi-t'ang flourished and Kalang declined. Pi-t'ang prepared to invite a Living Buddha to move into its establishment, but Kalang refused permission. The lamas of the lamaseries fought among themselves in 1912, and the Moslem General, Ma K'o-ch'en, sent troops to quell the troubles. In 1915 the country was troubled by the Pai Lang (White Wolf) brigands, and the old feud flared up again. Kalang accused Pi-t'ang at the subprefecture of Hsün-hua. Finally Kalang refused to accept the verdict of the subprefect and prepared to fight Pi-t'ang. The general, Ma K'o-ch'en of Hsining, sent his troops, and twenty-one fighting lamas of Kalang and seven Moslem soldiers were killed. Kalang had to pay an indemnity of $10,000 for the soldiers killed. The members of the intendancy were put into jail and Pi-t'ang was declared independent by the Moslem general. These facts give an insight into the problems of the subsidiaries, the very loose ties which knit mother and daughter houses, the reasons which cause a scission, and the ways in which their separation may be achieved and independence acquired. Very often the part played by the intendants is paramount in creating the breach between mother and daughter houses.

LAMA ARMY

At present, the lamaseries of Huang-chung no longer have a regular armed force of lamas who are maintained by the lamasery, as is still the rule in Tibet. The only record encountered in the *Annals* of Hsining (ch. 28, p 13) concerning a lama army is a supplication sent to the emperor during Cheng-te period (1506–1521) by the Chinese officials of Hsining, asking that the farmers of Hsining be exempted from the burden of supporting the lama army. At that time there existed only the important lamasery of Ch'ü-t'an, with its subsidiaries, some Nang-suos and Karwas, and the lamasery of Shachün. From the relatively small number of lamas at that time, it may be assumed that the lama army con- 175 792 701

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

for the next two years collecting alms; Seerkok offered a thousand big trees, Labrang $6,000, Erh-ku-lung $1,000. After three years the temple was rebuilt. 175 792

In 1910 the same thing happened at the monastery of Chu erh under similar circumstances.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE LAMAS

FA-T'AI, CALLED "MASTER OF THE DOCTRINE" ("LOB-PON" OR "MK'AMPO")

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The supreme chief of this independent institution is the Fa-t'ai. His office is the most honorable one a lama may fill. Fa-t'ais are chosen from among respectable lamas with a blameless record, celebrated for their knowledge. Not only lamas are invited to that office, but even Living Buddhas. Most of the eminent lamas in the country have been Fa-t'ais in nearly all the big lamaseries in Huang-chung. It has been recorded that a lama, even a Living Buddha, who is a member of an affiliate, never declines the invitation to fill this office at the mother house. Each college also has its own Fa-t'ai.

The office of Fa-t'ai is held for a term of three years only. The intendancy proposes to the supreme chief of the lamasery the name of the desired lama, and, on obtaining the consent of the supreme chief, sends lamas with the invitations. The Fa-t'ai lives in a beautiful residence and has as many lama servants as he desires. He is supposed to be the spiritual director of the institution which invited him, and to possess the power to reform the behavior of the lamas and to urge even stricter observance of the rules. It has been recorded how the stubborn Sumpa of Erh-ku-lung demanded in Lhasa the complete neutrality of the lamas of his community at the time when all the lamas of Lhasa prepared to participate in the civil war, and that finally the example set by him was followed by all the lamaseries of Lhasa. The same thing happened in Kumbum in 1895 at the time of the rebellion of the Moslems. The Fa-t'ai (m'Kampo) was the Living Buddha Mina, a quiet and peaceful man, who ordered the lamas to prepare only to defend the lamasery in case of attack. However, Shertoch, another Living Buddha of Kumbum, more turbulent and still recalling the destruction of the monastery except for the temple containing the celebrated tree during the revolt of 1862–1874, stirred the lamas to attack the enemy in the Moslem stronghold of T'opa, fighting on the side of the Chinese Army. After the first attacks had been unsuccessful, and several lamas had been killed, the war party grew bitter against Mina, who had to resign the post of Fa-t'ai and for some time was in fear of his life.[10] Achia, the chief and proprietor of Kumbum must have been an irresolute man, for he did not interfere even in such critical circumstances. [669]

[10] Wellby, *op. cit.*, 281. Rynhart, *op. cit.*, 72, 92.

The Fa't'ai even has the power to redress the mal- 792
administration of the intendancies, but all these powers 794
are more nominal than effective, because the name of 534
the Fa-t'ai-to-be is proposed by the intendancies themselves to the supreme chief of the lamasery. They know very well which Fa-t'ais are bent on reforms and set in their ways, and in order to secure the peace of the lamas and their own, they avoid proposing the name of "trouble makers." The Fa-t'ais, on the other hand, are practical Orientals. They know their appointment lasts for only three years, and that, if they should start with reforms, they would meet with the general covert opposition of the intendancies and of all the lamas, and their reforms would be hamstrung, so why borrow troubles if the next Fa-t'ai would undo what his predecessor had built up?

Therefore, the powers of a Fa-t'ai in Huang-chung are in practice reduced to theoretical and honorary dimensions. They are venerated as the learned supreme teachers of the community and occupy the highest seat in the main temple, next to that of the supreme chief of the lamasery. They very seldom attend the ceremonies in the temple, except when a rich pilgrim invites the community to read texts in his behalf. They attend the ceremony at the time of the festivities in order to enhance the prestige of the community, and march in procession with a stately measured tread to the temple, with the traditional splendor of their retinue. In the fourth, sixth, and eighth months they preach in the temple for the lamas for a few days. The rest of the time they live a happy, peaceful life in their residences, devoting their time to study and meditation, and entrusting, as their predecessors did, the whole direction of the institution to the intendant, who in the final analysis governs the entire institution. Fa-t'ais are inclined more to the speculative than the practical side of life.

A Fa-t'ai has to be a rich man in order to be able to fulfill his office. On the one hand he receives a small salary and at the time of the distribution of alms he receives as many shares as the supreme chief of the lamasery, but the flow of donations is irregular and unpredictable. On the other hand, a Fa-t'ai, several times a year, has to entertain the lamas of the community in a more or less sumptuous manner, with tea, butter, *tsamba*, mutton, beef, rice, raisins, and rolls. Each lama has to take home a fixed number of rolls. These repeated entertainments of lamas, four or five times a year, are the big expenses which a poor Fa-t'ai cannot afford, and they explain why poor but celebrated lamas decline the offer of the office of Fa-t'ai in large communities.

INTENDANT

Every day, during the morning assembly, a few re- [624]
marks are made to the community by the intendant concerning the observance of rules, the decorum required of lamas, the punishments inflicted the previous day

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4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

for infractions of the rules, the reform of some misbehavior, the arrival of distinguished guests or pilgrims, the offer of important gifts, and special religious ceremonies asked for by devout people. Herein consists the entire direction and instruction of the lamas, except for those who study in the colleges.

His role has been explained. He is the chief executive of the institution and administers its wealth. He has his own residence; his courtyard is his court of justice, where all the suits of the lamas and of the subjects are judged. All the officials of the institution receive his orders; he has one or two procurators helping him in the material administration, commanding a number of servants varying in accordance with the importance of the lamasery.

DISCIPLINARIANS

Their function is a really important element in the government of hundreds of uncivilized lamas and turbulent young folk living in the same lamasery, most of whom wander correctly along the path of monastic life more from fear of severe corporal punishment than for pure love of Buddha. I never saw a master of discipline in the lamaseries wearing a delightful smile. More often they seemed to be the type of tormentors that might step out of a picture of the Eighteen Buddhist Hells. No wonder the lamas, especially the young folk, dread them.

Usually there are two disciplinarians appointed by the Fa-t'ai for a term of one year. Often they have been proposed for the position by the intendant and his councillors. The disciplinarian presides over a number of lictors. During ceremonies in the temple the disciplinarian maintains order among the older lamas and keeps a constant eye on the novices. A breach of silence or any irreverence is punished instantly by blows from his rawhide whip. He takes note of the presence and absence of lamas at the morning ceremonies, and must investigate to find out whether lamas, not enrolled in the monastery, or laymen, are remaining with their friends at night inside the lamasery, and is responsible in general for the observance of the rules of the monastery.

Permission is required from the intendancy to leave the lamasery for a long time. Business deals are not to be made too ostentatiously. At night lamas may gather with friends to relax, talk, play cards and chess, but are not allowed to make much noise or to disturb the sleep of their neighbors. Gambling is not allowed, nor is the drinking of liquor. At night, the disciplinarian with some of his lictors, armed with rawhide whips, makes a tour of the lamasery. Lamas found brawling, quarrelling, or fighting are brought to the court of the intendant, where penalties are meted out in various brutal forms. The time of the festivities is a difficult one for the disciplinarians, when merchants pitch their tents, and lamas and people drive bargains.

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4: Schram M-S (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

Very often fights occur, for no important deal is closed in the Orient without brawling or quarrelling. At that time the disciplinarians and their lictors are on duty all day and night. 792 626 794

At festival time women are allowed in the monastery, and relatives are allowed to visit their lama and stay at night in his home, after permission has been obtained from the intendancy. Several old lamas explained to me that the disciplinarian has to be changed every year in order to prevent the lamas from becoming too well acquainted with him, and arranging by bribery to break the rules. How officials, with such a terrible exterior appearance, can be approached so easily to be bribed is shrouded in mystery. For this reason, in all the lamaseries of Huang-chung the disciplinarians are said to be changed every year.

PRECENTOR—UM-DSE

In every lamasery there is a precentor, the leader of the texts recited at the assemblies in the temple. He is usually a man endowed with a voice that resounds in a deep, low, grave tone. At the same time he is the master of ceremonies who trains the officiants. He opens the prayers in a loud voice, in a special low register, the others taking up the chants in unison at the top of their voices. 792 794

COUNCILLORS

In larger lamaseries there are usually four councillors, older lamas, appointed by the Fa-t'ai for three years on the recommendation of the intendant. They constitute in effect, with the intendant, the administrative board of the institution. Before the name of the appointee is proposed to the Fa-t'ai, the intendant refers the proposal to the chief of the lamasery. The result is that the nominally supreme powers of a Fa-t'ai within his institution are in practice curtailed, and the influence wielded by the intendant upon the supreme chief of the lamasery being usually unlimited, the intendant is in reality the supreme ruler of the institution.

The rules to be observed in the lamaseries by all the inmates include the non-admittance of women, the non-admittance at night of laymen, or lamas who are not on the roster, and the obligation to attend the ceremonies prescribed for the members of the community. All other rules conform with the elementary standards of good behavior.

COLLEGES

In important lamaseries, colleges have been established, theoretically as centers of higher education. Some foreign travelers call them "universities." In Huang-chung the only requirements for becoming a member of one of the four traditional colleges and reaping the benefits of the institution, are to be a member of the organic community of the lamas and to know the prescribed texts recited at the meetings held at the temple of the college. Accordingly, the majority 792 794 873

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4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

of the members of a college, at the time they enter, have previously received only the training of ordinary lamas, which consists of learning to read and write more or less correctly. Old lamas, as well as young Wendees, from the time they fulfill these two conditions, are allowed to apply for membership if the colleges have an appeal for them. A lama is not compelled to enter any college. If he does, the manner of joining or leaving a college is the same as described for joining or leaving the community of the lamas. Every lama is allowed to remain a member of a college for as long as the appeal of the college persists, and usually he remains a member for the whole of his lifetime.

Each college is an independent unit within the lamasery, having its own wealth and administration, its own temple, administrative buildings, and residence for its Fa-t'ai. The administration of the colleges is built on the pattern of the organization of the community of the lamas, with the same kinds of officials, and enjoying the same kinds of autonomous rights and privileges.

The four colleges are: (1) The College of Philosophy and Metaphysics, (2) The College of Ritual, Magic and Astrology, (3) The College of Medicine, and (4) The College of Sacred Scripture and Monastic Rules.

In Huang-chung at present (1910–1920) nothing more is required from the members of a college than attendance at the ceremonies in its temple and at the instruction given by the Fa-t'ai on a few fixed dates. There are no regular courses with compulsory attendance, no program of studies is required to be completed within a certain number of years, there are no compulsory examinations, and no obligation to take any degree or diploma. No director supervises the studies of the members of the college; studies are a personal matter, depending on the initiative of each individual.

A lama who has some feeling for study, who possesses some money provided by his family, or whose master is willing to spend some money for his education, goes to see a learned lama taking with him some meat, noodles, raisins, sugar, and some money, and prostrates himself, offering the ceremonial scarf and asking the lama to be his teacher. Usually, three or four lamas manage to become pupils of the same master. At fixed times they have to bring presents to the teacher. The study of the book designated by the master starts with committing the text to memory, and recitation before the master. Two or three times a week the master takes time to hear the recitation. Student and master are in no hurry; once in a while the master is too busy to teach, or one of the students is prevented from attending the lesson. The students all engage in domestic duties. Their capacities and fervor for study are not the same. After a few weeks one of them is memorizing the fourth, one the tenth sheet, and so on. After several weeks more, a couple of them have no further desire for study and drop out.

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The master starts with the explanation of the text after the student has finished memorizing it, and so it happens that, after some time, one pupil is studying a second or a third book, while the others are still studying the first one. It is hard to teach pupils who have not received the same educational preparation and who progress at an unequal pace. The lack of elementary schools and high schools compels the master to adapt his teaching to the capacity and enthusiasm of each of the students, and inevitably the study loses its interest for pupil and master.

It is no wonder that very few learned lamas are encountered at present among the lamas of Huang-chung. The Living Buddha Goorong bzan, of the Red Sect, was the only man celebrated for his learning all over the country during the period 1910–1920, and he enjoyed this reputation among lamas of the Yellow Sect as well as the Red Sect. In Kumbum there was also a learned Living Buddha, Chao-hsi, who was said to have given instruction in the lamasery of Galdan in Tibet. In June, 1920, he was invited by the community of lamas of Kumbum to give instruction for ten days, and Kumbum seized this opportunity to invite all the lamas of Huang-chung to attend the ceremony, remembering that each attendant should offer a ceremonial scarf to the preacher, and bring his food with him. Kumbum, however, would offer two butter-teas to the participants each day. I was at Hua-yüan, a branch of Erh-ku-lung, at that time, and the intendant, in order to have his lamas attend the instruction, himself offered to provide them with the food for twelve days; but only 12 among the 58 lamas went to Kumbum.

In 1914 I was told that among the 3,000 lamas of Kumbum, 1,300 were members of the College of Philosophy, 350 of the College of Ritual, Magic and Astrology, 200 each in the College of Medicine and the College of Sacred Scripture and Monastic Rules. All these numbers have to be reduced according to the ratio previously noted for the 3,000 lamas of Kumbum, but the proportion is the same for the members attending the colleges. Thus, among the 3,000 lamas 2,000 or two-thirds were enjoying a higher educational training in the colleges, and they remained members of the colleges for the whole of their lives. This was generally true for all of the colleges of Huang-chung.

The reason for the unusual attendance at the colleges is not that these institutions are centers of higher education, but rather that they provide meals for their members. The richest colleges, able to give the greatest number and the choicest meals, are the best attended, such as the College of Philosophy. Another attraction of this very popular college, teaching the most arduous of all the sciences, is the relaxation provided by the public disputations. The schedule of the meals provided by the various colleges supports these statements:

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baters who are always the same and fond of displaying their ability.

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Not a few among them are real actors, who would honor the stages of the best theaters in the civilized world. Their poses, mimicry, jokes, verve, double meaning suggestions, affected sounds, and their knack of keeping the people amused, whet the curiosity and provide a real relaxation. Nearly the whole community huddles around them, even the old lamas who are used to sitting sleepily at these compulsory, boring meetings, for whom the novelty has worn off many, many years ago, and who have never been interested in the subject itself, strain their ears and huddle a little nearer to the stage and relax happily.

The Yellow Sect has always been fond of dialectic. The T'u-kuan Hutukhtu of Erh-ku-lung was celebrated for his logic in the learned world of Tibet, Mongolia, and Huang-chung.[11] The dialectic methods of Nagarjuna are particularly enjoyed by the philosophers. He used to "prove," in the most incredible ways, the nonexistence of the world, of his proper self, and even of Buddhism.[12] The debaters try by means of recitation of endless memorized texts to stagger their opponents, and by tortuous questions to entice them into snares of sophism and to prove the most unbelievable theses. The attractive public disputations help to break the monotony of the monastic life, and to provide a couple of hours of relaxation.

It was said that once in a while some students passed official examinations and obtained titles and degrees, but I never had the opportunity to be present at such ceremonies.

Both these reasons explain the unusual attraction toward the College of Philosophy of the large number of lamas, who even lack the education of a student of an elementary school, and also the stubborn perseverance of the old lamas in continuing as members of the college.

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The conditions for becoming a member of the other colleges and the method of study are identical with those of the College of Philosophy. The lamas have to attend only one compulsory service in the early morning in the main temple, as required by the organization of the community of the lamas, and have plenty of time to attend the exercises prescribed by other colleges in the morning and afternoon; they even have plenty of time to indulge in domestic duties and commerce. It would be instructive to make a comparison between the standard of the studies in Huang-chung and that of the celebrated lamaseries of Tibet, as described in nearly all the works concerned with the subject.[13] After investigating the situation in Huang-chung, I harbor suspicions concerning the punctilious observance of the pro-

[11] Huth, *op. cit.*, 281.

[12] René Grousset, *Philosophies indiennes*, ch. 9, *passim*, Paris, Desclée de Brower, 1931.

[13] Waddell, *op. cit.*, 184–188; Filchner, *op. cit.*, 350–358; Tucci, *op. cit.* 1: 94, etc.

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gram of studies, elaborately built up and highly vaunted, and the knowledge and education sometimes attributed to the lamas in Tibet and Mongolia. My opinions seem to be justified by the opinions of other authors, who have lived for years among the lamas, knowing their language and being themselves Buddhists.

The learned Buddhist, Mme Alexandra David-Neel, who lived in the lamaseries of Tibet and Huang-chung for many years, knew the language very well and was always sympathetic to the lamas, giving "philosophical" justifications for much questionable behavior, but she confesses:

> At the morning exercise are intermixed subtle philosophy with commercialism, high spirituality with feverish pursuit of vile satisfactions, which are impossible to separate from each other; novices, educated in this whirlpool of contrary influences, follow one or another of them, according to their nature and the direction given to them by their master.[14] In Tibet the clerical education has produced only a "small number" of selected literary men, a "large number" of slothful brutes, joyous, gay fellows, and picturesque blusterers, and all these various characteristics, if they do not show up in every lama, are at least "simultaneously deeply ingrained in the nature of all of them."[15]

Kawaguchi, a learned Japanese Buddhist monk, who went to Lhasa to study Lamaism in the learned centers of Tibet, states that they graduate from the college after having studied for twenty-one years; they study especially the Buddhist Catechism and philosophy. They are from thirty to thirty-six years of age when they graduate.[16] It may safely be said that their purpose in entering the priesthood is only to procure the largest possible amount of fortune as well as the highest possible fame in that entirely secluded world of theirs. They do not seek religious truths or practice religious austerities for the work of delivering men and leading them to salvation, but they study to acquire fame, wealth, and influence, and there is nothing deep in their religious life, and 999 out of 1,000 have no conception of the problems of future life.[17] He states also that their faith is a veritable mass of superstition.[18]

These two learned Buddhists seem to confirm my suspicions and to reveal the philosophy and the behavior of the lama institutions. They corroborate my own observations, made at various institutions during the same span of time. A single fact may account only for the mentality of a single man; a multitude of facts, however, reveal the mentality of an entire corporation.[19]

[14] Alexandra David-Neel, *Mystiques et magiciens du Tibet*, 95.

[15] David-Neel, *op. cit.*, 96.

[16] Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three years in Tibet*, 291, Adyar, Madras, Japan, 1909.

[17] *Ibid.*, 348.

[18] *Ibid.*, 560.

[19] Vreeland, *op. cit.*, 108, *sq.*, gives interesting comparative data concerning the lamas and their behavior in the lamaseries situated in the Gobi Desert in the Narobanchin territory.

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LIVING BUDDHAS

ABODE

Living Buddhas who are possessors of lamaseries, live in them; Living Buddhas who do not possess their own lamasery, ask permission of the supreme chief of a lamasery to live as a guest on his property and to build a residence. Usually this kind of poor Living Buddha tries to dwell in a rich and celebrated monastery, where pilgrim caravans come and plenty of alms are offered. By having a share in the alms it is easier for them to make a living. This is also the reason why lamas prefer to be entered on the rolls of these rich institutions. Many Living Buddhas who have monasteries of their own like to have another residence in a celebrated lamasery such as Kumbum or Labrang.

These buildings enhance the splendor of the lamasery and are usually built by the tribesmen of the Living Buddhas. A stele is erected in the courtyard, with the names of all the people who contributed to the building expenses engraved on it. Larger or smaller buildings are added in order to provide quarters for them when they visit the lamasery. All the important Living Buddhas in the country possess such more or less luxurious residences in the celebrated lamaseries, built by their intendancies. This kind of residence is called Karwa. In Kumbum there are 83, in Labrang 40, in Erh-ku-lung 14.

WHAT IS A LIVING BUDDHA?

A Living Buddha is the incarnation of a *Bodhisattva* who, having attained the highest perfection, has potentially become a Buddha. He renounces the blessedness of *Nirvana* and makes a vow to remain in this world in order to promote, by example and teaching, the salvation of as great a number of its creatures as possible. His vital essence thus passes from body to body—because the body, like every material aggregate, is destined to dissolve—but it remains immaculate in its acquired unalterable purity and holiness.[20]

APPLICATION OF THE SYSTEM IN HUANG-CHUNG

It has been recorded that the theory of succession by reincarnation only started in Lhasa in 1475. In Huang-chung, the first known Living Buddha was Chang-chia, born in 1642. No records exist concerning the appearance of the first Living Buddhas in Ch'ü-t'an, Kumbum, or Sha-ch'üng. However, it may be taken for granted that these lamaseries would not have had their Living Buddhas as early as 1642, but it was probably close to that time that they began to follow the example set by Erh-ku-lung, rather than suffer in competition with it.

At any rate it seems that succession by reincarnation must have started and been practiced on a large scale during the period from 1600 to 1723, when numerous hermitages and branches arose all over the country of

[20] Tucci-Ghersi, *Secrets of Tibet*, 38, London, 1935.

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the lamas living secluded in the mountains, all indulged in magic. It is not known when most of them went over to the Yellow Sect, perhaps between 1600 and 1723; nor is it known when the first lamas of the Yellow Sect penetrated the country, diffusing the reform. If account were taken of the date 1560, when a small hermitage of ten Yellow lamas started at Kumbum, and developed slowly; and the date of 1604 when Erh-ku-lung humbly began, it may be presumed that until that time the Red Sect was the only one prevalent in Huang-chung, living a precarious existence owing to the intermittent inroads and revolts in the country. Only after Gushi Khan had conquered Tibet in 1636 and offered it to the Dalai Lama and after the Ch'ing dynasty (1644) had established the supremacy of the Yellow Sect, and the hated rival sects had been enfeebled, can it be assumed that the Yellow Sect entered a period of success in Huang-chung.

It was often said that, after the encounter of Altan Khan with the Dalai Lama in Kukunor (1577), where Altan proclaimed the Yellow Sect the official religion of the Mongols, and built a temple, the sect started diffusing on a large scale in Huang-chung. This assumption is hard to prove on account of the hatred fostered against the invading Mongols, and the disturbances in the country, for in 1591 the Monguor troops with the Chinese Army burned to the ground the temple built by Altan fifteen years before,[1] and the Mongol, Nairamdahu, persecuted the Yellow Sect in Kukunor in 1633.

PRESENT CONDITIONS OF THE RED SECT IN HUANG-CHUNG

The conditions under which the Red lamas lived during the Ming period, in the always disturbed country, seem to have been akin with those under which they now live in the region north of the Hsining River. A small number of them are encountered in villages there. Lamas of several villages, constituting a small group, choose from among them a chief, who holds the position for one year. They possess their own small temple where, four times a year, they gather for seven days in order to read their texts, perform their rites, and discuss their own topics with their chief. Some of them have a pupil who receives training from his master. Each of them tries to be invited by the people to perform rites that are paid for. Not having a monastery or a Living Buddha, the institution lacks a backbone.

After 1642, when the Yellow Sect started the practice of Living Buddhas in Huang-chung and developed its strong organization, two of the most important Red groups south of the Hsining River, where the Red lamas were more numerous, managed to have their own Living Buddhas. In the group of Goorong bzan near

[1] *Annals* of Hsining, ch. 31, 18*b*.

1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

FOOD, DRINK, AND NARCOTICS

262 796 527 The diet of the Monguors is frugal. Meat, which with milk and milk products was the staple food of their nomad ancestors, has long been a luxury. Like the Chinese, they now eat meat for half a month at the New Year, on the third of the third moon, the fifth of the fifth moon, the fifteenth of the eighth moon, and the eighth of the twelfth moon. Apart from these feasts, they eat meat only at weddings, when children have been born, at funeral feasts, or when they have distinguished guests. For such feasts, a sheep is killed. In the short summer rainy season it is also customary to kill a sheep when there is rain for several days, preventing them from going out to the fields; and it is also customary to slaughter a sheep when the harvest is carried in. Meat is always boiled. Roasted or broiled meat is very seldom eaten and is not considered tasty.

[462] 231 Every family slaughters its own animals. The slaughtering is never done by women, who are expected to produce life, not to destroy it. Most Monguor men cease to do any slaughtering when they become about fifty years old, owing to the lamaistic belief that it is not fitting for a man who is approaching the time of his own death to slaughter animals, for fear of being reincarnated as an animal.

Cows, oxen, and pigs are slaughtered by cutting the throat. Sheep are often choked. Another method of slaughtering sheep—the traditional Mongol method—is to turn the animal on its back with the head pointing west, stretching the skin tight over the breast. A slit is then cut in the skin, and the butcher slips in his hand, seizes the heart, and jerks it loose. The sheep dies instantly and no blood is shed outside the carcass.

The Monguors very seldom slaughter horses, mules, or donkeys. When these animals grow old they are either sold or allowed to live until they die a natural death. [262] The meat of horses, mules, and donkeys is never eaten, nor do the Monguors allow the use of their cooking kettles for boiling such meat.

Chickens are usually killed either by cutting off the head or by thrusting a pin into the brain.

262 All Monguors abhor the meat of marmots. Marmot fat is used as a salve on the saddle sores of horses and mules, but as food the Monguors say, "Marmots are to us Monguors what pigs are to the Mohammedans."

[715] There is a small religious sect among the Monguors, known as "those who fast," the members of which never eat meat or garlic, or drink wine.

[272] In the morning the Monguors drink a cup of tea and eat a piece of bread when the sun has risen in the sky "to the height of a post." Salt is always put in the boiling tea. In many families only the parents and the oldest son drink tea; the other men, and all the women, drink only water with a little milk in it. (The Chinese, of course, do not use milk in tea or in any other way.)

[252] The bread is made from barley flour and is either steamed or baked. Ordinary people seldom eat wheat

[P. 117a]

/The Monguors/

N *563 M 342 591 592 ditionally, the older sons move out of their parents' home when they are married, taking their share of the inheritance with them. The youngest son, the "guardian of the hearth," remains with his parents and receives the residual inheritance. He and his wife are therefore placed in the "blessed corner" to carry on the prosperity of the family.

N *563 M 342 M [36] [782] [353] [352] Both rich and poor build their own houses. The young people of the village all come to help erect the mud walls, and are rewarded with a big dinner. The dwellings of the rich have brick foundations for the mud walls, and also painted woodwork inside. Every courtyard has a prayer flag (on which prayers are written in Tibetan) fastened to a pole in the middle of the courtyard, and at the base of the pole, an oven for fire offerings. In the chief's room in every home there is a picture of the guardian deity of the family hanging on the wall, and in front of the picture, a low table where butter lamps and offering bowls are placed.

b. Food, drink and tobacco

N *563 M 262 [231] M [252] Although the Mongours are of nomad origin, they do not continue to use the staple nomad diet after they adopt an agricultural economy. Meat, milk and milk products become luxuries to the Mongours of Kansu. Because of the scarcity of domestic animals, meat is seldom eaten except at festivals or celebrations. For such occasions a sheep is usually killed. Meat is always boiled, as the Mongours do not like roasted meat.

The Mongours eat beef and pork as well as mutton, and unlike the Mongols, they eat chicken but never the meat of horses, mules or donkeys. A small religious sect among them, known as "those who fast," never eat meat or garlic, or drink wine.

M [794]

The staple diet of ordinary people is frugal, consisting mainly of tea, bread, noodles made with barley flour, linseed and colza (rapeseed) oil. Millet is not usually eaten because very little is grown. Vegetables are raised for sale; only vegetables pickled in brine and vinegar are eaten daily. Salt, sugar, butter and wheat flour are luxuries. Only the wealthy can afford fruit. Each family has its own grindstone for milling barley flour. The family also bakes its own bread.

M [412]

N *563 M 264 415 The Mongours eat with bowls and chopsticks. At home they lick their bowls clean before taking them back to the kitchen. Some always keep their bowls with them, in the breasts of their gowns. They are always licked clean, never washed.

Most families distill their own liquor from barley or wheat.

N *563 M 273 [431] Like the Mongols, both sexes like to drink. Men, especially, have a weakness for it, and drunken fighting at parties is not uncommon. Wine is used for gifts, and is a necessary part of any festival occasion.

The men are habitual pipe smokers. They smoke the long-

N *563 M 276 stemmed Chinese pipe with a small brass bowl at the end. Some

/The Monguors/

N *563 M 621 183 178

The village effectively governs itself, punishing offenders, righting wrongs and maintaining peace. Great stress is placed upon faithful adherence to the old customs, and one of the important duties of the village chief is to see that they are observed. In any discussion about village affairs, the supreme argument is that of old customs. To neglect or forget the customs of the ancestors would undermine the stability and prosperity of the clan. (See Social Structure.) This conviction is dinned into the ears of the young on every possible occasion. A good test of a prospective village chief or T'u-ssu is his firm and unshakable faith in the strict observance of clan tradition.

M [867]

N *563 M 621 183 179 178

During the administration of the Chinese Nationalists, the village elders had a real struggle to save their old customs and traditions. Social concepts had been undermined gradually by the enrollment of Chinese into Mongour clans, and in villages where Chinese had become elders, Chinese concepts had seeped in and were creating repercussions among the young Mongours.

e. Stealing and gambling

N *563 M [685] [673] [525] [794]

Stealing is considered an unforgiveable sin, and stealing animals is the worst possible form of stealing. All thieves are punished severely; cattle thieves are shown no mercy.

Gambling is not permitted. Any offender must pay a fine, which is used for the upkeep of the temples or the expenses of the spring and autumn religious festivals.

f. Widowhood and remarriage

N *563 M 587

A widow is allowed to remarry, and to make her own decision about whether or whom to marry. If she consents to remarry, she will exchange girdles with her prospective second husband in token of her willingness. If she wishes to marry one man and is being compelled to marry another, she can notify the first of the time of her departure to the home of the second, and the desired mate may kidnap her on the way. If a widow is kidnapped against her will, however, the matter is taken to the chief and the village elders.

g. Discipline of children

N *563 M 869

Children are trained early in life. They attend the meetings at which crimes are discussed and punishment meeted out, and learn first hand that undesirable behavior brings undesirable consequences. They are never shielded from the realities and miseries of life, and as a result they are more sophisticated in their social knowledge than youngsters in other countries.

h. Etiquette

N *563 M 576 264 603

According to custom, only the oldest generation may be seated during meals. When the family is entertaining, the family head presides at the meal. His wife does not sit down unless the guests invite her to do so. During family meals, both grandparents sit on the k'ang, and the elder son may sit on the edge